

The Abraham Lincoln National Airport Commission (ALNAC) and two of the world's leading airport developers praised Governor Blagojevich for selecting their unique and innovative public-private partnership as the state's "preferred" airport development plan. The Governor sent the plan to the Federal Aviation Administration today for approval.

"The Governor understands how important aviation is to the State economy. This plan is bold, visionary and economical," said Al McCowan, chairman of ALNAC. "Once approved by the FAA, Lincoln Airport will be built with private dollars; it will resolve Chicago's aviation capacity crunch; and it will create thousands of jobs in an area that needs and deserves them."

McCowan, the Mayor of University Park, which borders the airport site, added: "This airport features many firsts. It will be the nation's first new non-replacement airport in 30 years; the nation's first privately financed commercial airport; and the world's first low-cost carrier airport."

Kurt Eichler is the Executive Vice President of LCOR Inc., which has formed a joint venture with SNC-Lavalin USA to finance and build the airport. "We commend the Governor for taking this important and historic next step. We are equally pleased that the plan we developed under ALNAC's competitive process is again selected to be not only appropriate, but the best alternative," said Eichler. LCOR and SNC-Lavalin have built, financed and operated airports in similar partnerships in Europe, Canada and around the globe.

"The ALNAC plan, now with the State's support, is an endorsement of how a well-conceived public-private partnership creates great synergy," Eichler added. "We look forward to the full endorsement of the ALNAC plan by the FAA. Once that is achieved and the State mandates the land to ALNAC, we will finalize a master development plan to finance and construct the airport."

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr., who spearheaded the efforts for the public-private partnership, also praised Blagojevich for his leadership and courage. "This project comes at no cost to taxpayers and is exactly what is needed. Chicago needs new aviation capacity and the Southland needs an economic anchor. I am eager to work with the FAA to make this 30-year-old dream a reality and to strengthen Chicago's role as the world's pre-eminent aviation hub."